

NSC BRIEFING

2 June 1959

ITALY

I. In Sicilian regional elections on 7 June Communists and Nenni Socialists may gain ~~40~~ seats in 90-member regional assembly at expense of Christian Democrats.

A. Commies now have 20; Nenni Socialists, 10; Christian Democrats, 32; rightist parties, 23; Sicilian Christian Social Union, 5.

1. Last group headed by Silvio Milazzo, dissident Christian Democrat who since last October has governed Sicily with coalition of his own followers, Nenni Socialists, monarchists and neo-fascists, supported by Communists.

2. Milazzo advocating "new deal" and greater autonomy for Sicily.

II. Communists and Nenni Socialists have already scored some gains in northern Italy.

A. In Val d' Aosta balloting on 17 May, united front of extreme left and strongly Catholic Union Valdotaime won 25 of 35 regional assembly seats.

1. Communists got 3 and Nenni Socialists, 4.

B. In 31 May administrative elections in Ravenna province in traditional "red belt," Communist-Nenni Socialist alliance won 52 percent of votes compared to ⁴⁹50 percent in ¹⁹⁵⁷~~1956~~ ~~national~~ ^{administrative} elections.

III. Leftist gains in Sicily would cause further strains within Christian Democratic party.

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- A. Milazzo's Sicilian Christian Social Union might become a second competing Catholic party.**
 - B. Milazzo's accession to power abetted by ex-premier Scelba and other Christian Democratic party notables as part of move against the then premier and party secretary, Amintore Fanfani.**
 - 1. They can be expected to oppose any comeback attempt by Fanfani at next October's party congress.**
- IV. Despite Rome government concern over leftist trend, it is unlikely there will be any intervention with force to prevent Communists gaining stronger foothold on Sicilian administration.**